

Fact Sheet # 1

Understanding the Racialization of Poverty in Ontario **An Introduction in 2007**

Did you know that...

- * Ethno-racial minority group members (people of colour) make up over 13% of Canada's population; by the year 2017, this number will rise to 20%;
- * by the year 2017, more than half of Toronto's population will be people of colour;
- * nearly one in five immigrants experiences a state of chronic low income, which is more than twice the rate for Canadian-born individuals;
- * Ethno-racial minority (ie.non-European) families make up 37% of all families in Toronto, but account for 59% of poor families;
- * between 1980 and 2000, while the poverty rate for the non-racialized (ie.European heritage) population fell by 28%, the poverty among racialized families rose by 361%; and
- * 32% of children in racialized families, and 47% of children in recent immigrant families in Ontario live in poverty

What does this mean ?

More and more people in Ontario come from racialized group backgrounds (ie. communities of colour). These persons face a much higher risk of being poor and are differentially impacted by the factors linked to it, like unstable and unsafe work conditions and poor health. While poverty can be a concern for nearly anyone, its causes, forms and consequences aren't the same. Racialized group members face specific and particular hurdles and challenges.

What is meant by poverty ?

Canada most often uses the *Low Income Cut-Off (LICO)* to measure financial hardship. The LICO is based on how much of a family's income is spent on basic needs like food and shelter. It also considers family size and community size. For example, a family of four living in a city of 300,000 people would fall just below the LICO with an annual income of \$32,000 before tax. So, when a family is only making this much money, they are likely to spend a disproportionate share of their income on basic needs when compared with the average family.

What is meant by the racialization of poverty ?

Racialized communities experience ongoing, disproportionate levels of poverty. In other words, people from ethno-racial minority groups (communities of colour) are more likely to fall below the LICO and to have related problems like poor health, lower education, and fewer job opportunities, than those from European backgrounds. While it is possible for anyone to experience low income and reduced opportunities, individual and systemic racism plays a large role in creating such problems. Discrimination means that they are less likely to get jobs when equally qualified and are likely to make less income than their white peers. It means they are more likely to live and work in poor conditions, to have less access to healthcare, and to be victims of police violence.

What does racialized poverty look like ?

This set of ten (10) fact sheets address different aspects of racialized poverty, starting with a **snapshot summary (#2)**, they look at **education & learning (#3)**, **health & well-being (#4)**, **employment (#5)**, **income levels and social assistance (#6)**, **justice and policing (#7)**, **immigration & newcomer settlement (#8)**, **housing & homelessness (#9)** and **food (in)security (#10)**. Although they are separated in order to more easily present the information, all the aspects are intimately inter-linked and affect one another. For example, having difficulty finding employment or living in unsafe housing conditions can lead to poor health. Lack of educational opportunities makes it difficult to find a job that pays well enough to make ends meet. Individual or systemic racism in Canadian society means that many people of colour have considerably fewer opportunities.

Who do we mean by racialized groups ?

The information in these fact sheets refers to Canadians of non-European background or heritage - both people of colour who are Canadian-born as well as those who are newcomers to Canada. We are aware of Aboriginal realities and lived experience as well as advocacy efforts to redress their racialized exclusion. We very much believe there are many links between such struggles and those of other racialized groups in Ontario and Canada. However, we also acknowledge and respect that Aboriginal claims to justice are distinct and require a different set of strategies and policy responses due to First Peoples specific historical relationship with Canada. For this reason, we do not include or address Aboriginal issues and circumstances in these fact sheets.

How do we understand racism ?

In “western” societies dominated by people of white, European backgrounds, different ethno-racial groups have always been targets of discrimination and social exclusion. These groups can be said to be *racialized* or *marked*, by the dominant group, as inferior. Racism refers not only to individual, negative beliefs and attitudes toward specific ethno-racial groups in society, beyond that racism is systemic and is a built-in feature of our society, embedded in our social institutions – like the education, health, social services, and justice systems.

Racism has existed in many different forms throughout history. In Canada and other “western” countries, for example, white people have discriminated against racialized groups through the practice of slavery, the destruction of communities, racial segregation of schools and neighbourhoods, selective and punitive immigration policies, exploitation of certain groups’ labour, over-policing in communities of colour, racial slurs, hate crimes and so on. Assorted behaviours and policies change over time, but the facts of inequality and unequal treatment have not gone away.

The Colour of Poverty Campaign & this set of fact sheets aims to -

- * promote an understanding of how poverty arises within or impacts upon racialized groups
- * suggest ways, tools & strategies for people to work toward equity & inclusion in Ontario.

For Further Information, Action Ideas and Advocacy Tools please go to -

The Colour of Poverty Campaign web-site - www.colourofpoverty.ca

Fact Sheet # 2

Understanding the Racialization of Poverty in Ontario **A Snapshot of Its Many Different Faces in 2007**

Education & Learning (Fact Sheet # 3)

Racialized students face discrimination in schools. They are often streamed into lower level non-academic programs, and unfairly targeted for expulsion. Children from poor families are half as likely to attend university as those who are well-off, and some racialized groups have very low rates of high school completion.

Health & Well-being (Fact Sheet # 4)

Poverty puts people at a much greater risk for poor health. Because many racialized people are poor, they face health problems from stress, unsafe working conditions, polluted neighbourhoods, and inadequate food. Many have trouble accessing culturally appropriate healthcare, social services and other needed supports.

Employment (Fact Sheet # 5)

Racialized groups are much more likely to be unemployed than others. They are over-represented in low-paying, unstable, and low-status jobs, in which their rights as workers are not fully protected. They are under-represented in professional positions, and immigrants' skills are often not recognized in Canada.

Income Levels & Social Assistance (Fact Sheet # 6)

Poverty among racialized groups is growing. In Toronto, the number of immigrants who are poor has grown by 125%, and almost 60% of poor families are from racialized groups. Social assistance in Ontario was severely cut back in the 1990s, and the minimum wage keeps people well below the poverty line.

Justice & Policing (Fact Sheet # 7)

Levels of crime and violence are closely linked to inequality and poverty. Poor, racialized communities are often over-policed, and men and women of colour are over-represented in jails and prisons. Racialized men are especially targeted for violence by policing services, including racial profiling at the Canadian border.

Immigration & Newcomer Settlement (Fact Sheet # 8)

As the face of immigration to Canada has changed dramatically over the past few decades poverty rates among newcomers have risen dramatically and critical settlement support services remain severely under-funded. People without status cannot easily access healthcare, education, fair work or police protection.

Housing & Homelessness (Fact Sheet # 9)

Racialized groups have higher levels of under-housing & homelessness due to poverty and unemployment, cuts to social programs, & lack of housing services. Racialized persons also face discriminatory & prohibitive demands from landlords. The majority of newcomers to Toronto live in unsafe, sub-standard housing.

Food (In)security (Fact Sheet # 10)

Since racialized groups are disproportionately poor, they are more likely to have trouble providing enough healthy and familiar food for their families, putting them and their children at higher risk for many diseases and chronic conditions. Assistance rates & minimum wage do not provide income to afford a healthy diet.

COLOUR OF POVERTY CAMPAIGN

In recognizing that the growing social exclusion of racialized group members in Canada (ie. people of colour) has led to ethno-racially, religiously and culturally defined inequality, particularly the very troubling phenomenon that some social scientists have come to describe as the “**racialization of poverty**” - several community based groups have come together in an effort to collectively address the ever-worsening trend. In working together to help bring about the needed policies, programs, research and related resource commitments - the “**Colour of Poverty Campaign**” is doing the following –

1) Build Community Capacity

In order to develop the necessary shared sense of awareness and understanding that is needed to tackle the issues, a series of educational fact sheets have been developed to cover the following priority topics - a backgrounder and overview on the racialization of poverty, health & well-being, income, employment, food (in)security, immigration & newcomer settlement, justice & policing, housing & homelessness, and education & learning. In addition, a complementary short film was commissioned to document several stories of individuals - people of colour living in poverty - and how this poverty affects their day-to-day lived realities. The film will be available for use in a DVD format.

Using these and other resources to help build local and province-wide community-based partnerships – **Colour of Poverty Campaign** members are travelling to communities around the province beginning with Hamilton, London, Ottawa, Toronto, and Windsor - to work with local community partners to help them make best use of the tools available. In this way we hope to galvanize these local communities into taking positive and constructive action for needed change. A web-site, an e-list and other related advocacy and e-action tools are being developed which will provide the means for the more effective sharing and dissemination of information, knowledge, strategies, approaches and opportunities between and across affected communities as well as the broader public.

2) Develop a Shared Framework for Action

A Roundtable for discussions among the affected racialized communities is being set up to provide all affected communities the opportunity to discuss among themselves the actions and strategies needed to reduce and/or eliminate racialized poverty and the social exclusion experienced by communities of colour. The initial focus of the Roundtable process will be the joint drafting of a **Shared Framework for Action** - through which communities & individuals will be able to collectively work to address racialized social exclusion and marginalization - on a coordinated, coherent and consistent province-wide basis.

3) Make Change Happen - Moving Forward on Implementation

Create a multi-sectoral dialogue that includes representatives from key mainstream service providers, social policy institutes and think-tanks, foundations and other funders, media related organizations as well as government representatives - to provide feedback and support for the **Shared Framework for Action** - as drafted by affected communities. Out of this initial dialogue an ongoing **Cross-Sectoral Work Group** will be set in motion made up of affected racialized community representation, as well as representatives of some of the key governmental and other constituencies named above. The Work Groups focus will be to develop and monitor an effective implementation plan for the Shared Framework for Action - best ensuring that the growing racialization of poverty in Ontario becomes a key if not central focus of all relevant institutional and governmental policy, program and service discussions and agendas - working towards the long term goal of the elimination of racialized inequity, exclusion and marginalization in this province.

Colour of Poverty Campaign – www.colourofpoverty.ca

Fact Sheet # 3

Understanding the Racialization of Poverty in Ontario In Education & Learning in 2007

How does racialized poverty affect people's access to education & learning ?

Having access to education greatly improves a person's job opportunities, income, health and general quality of life. In turn, living in poverty makes it less likely that someone will complete school or to be able to access higher education.

60% of people who receive social assistance are unable to read & write well enough to function in Canadian society.

Children of families with the lowest income levels are about half as likely as those in the top income level to attend university.

Many racialized students experience discrimination and alienation in elementary and secondary schools as well as in colleges and universities. Further they have few teachers and other role models from racialized communities who they see working within the various fields of education.

Black students are disproportionately placed in basic non-academic level and special needs programs.

Schools with high drop out rates are those with the highest numbers of racialized students.

Research shows that groups with the least education are those who have come as refugees from war-torn countries (see table below), but disadvantage in education is high for some other racialized groups as well.

Although many immigrant groups are better educated than Canadian-born people, Latin American immigrants, Canadian-born Black people, Indo-Pakistanis and West Asians have been found to have lower educational attainment.

Persons without high school diploma (Toronto)

European overall	17%
Grenadian	31%
Guyanese	26%
Vietnamese	46%
Afghan	39%
Sri Lankan & Tamil	39%
Somali	33%
Ethiopian	32%

Persons with university degree (Toronto)

European overall	25%
African overall	14%
Caribbean overall	15%
Tamil & Sri Lankan	10%
Somali	5%
Ethiopian	6%

Quick Notes

- * Ontario's growing racialized communities face a disproportionate, ongoing, and increasing risk of being poor.
- * **Racialized** persons refers to people of colour who are Canadian-born and to newcomer communities of colour.
- * By **racism**, we mean both the individual attitudes and behaviours as well as the built-in ways in which social policies and societal institutions discriminate.
- * Households that fall below Canada's **low income cut-off (LICO)** measure, spend a much larger percent of their income on basic necessities like food and shelter than the average family.
- * Racialized families are from 2 to 4 times more likely than white families to fall below the LICO.
- * Individual and systemic racism have clear & negative impacts on life chances for people of colour in Ontario.

Under Ontario policies like the “Safe Schools Act,” and “zero tolerance,” principals were given broad legal powers to suspend or expel students who they believed were a threat to safety. Researchers, lawyers, community groups, and parents quickly recognized how this has targeted racialized youth in very high numbers, particularly Black, Hispanic, and South Asian students.

Toronto District School Board trustees - who observe expulsion hearings - have reported that at least 80% of students being expelled are from racialized groups – most commonly Black students.

Expulsion from school makes it more likely that a student will drop out.

Racism is rarely addressed in Ontario schools. The focus is commonly on “multiculturalism” or “diversity”, which does not address inequality.

One study found that the word racism did not appear in the kindergarten to Grade 12 Ontario curriculum for any compulsory course !

Professional groups and schools tend to see non-Canadian educational background as inferior to Canadian, often not recognizing immigrants’ credentials.

Ontario has cut funding for English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, which are critical to helping both young students and adults successfully integrate into society and the job market.

Personal stories told at a conference on racism in education:

- A young Latino man in a Toronto high school was told he would never go to university, and was often treated with suspicion.
- A young black girl was told in school: “black girls cannot be ballerinas.”
- Children as young as 3 heard racist remarks from teachers, and received learning materials with racist images.
- Teacher candidates were told to beware of “kids with baggy pants because they carry guns.”
- Parents of colour were treated as hostile and pushy when they tried to raise the issue of racism in schools.

Everyday Lives

“I was raised to be educated, to go to university... and have a good job. But all these dreams are not there. I end up at the bottom...”

“When I came to Canada everybody [was] saying you need training. No matter what you have been trained for... you still need new training here.”

“I [can’t] remember learning about one racial or ethnocultural role model.”

“My eldest son was one of the first victims of zero tolerance and [lost] two years [of] high school... it was very hard for him to go back... Not only because the schools didn’t want him, but also because he had lost interest.”

“[t]he drop out rate is much higher in the Black community because of the zero tolerance policies... [W]e have 16 and 17 year-old Black males... who have been kicked out of school, some have learning disabilities and dyslexia and have no jobs skills... no life skills, nothing at all.

“Parents also are treated with horrific disrespect by staff because not only are we African, we’re also living in poverty, and people seem to equate the skin colour combined with poverty to mean stupidity...it seems like they don’t think we know when we’re being disrespected and racially profiled.”

The Antiracist Multicultural Education Network of Ontario (AMENO) is a group of diverse educators, community members and parents who are working to fight inequality and exclusion in Ontario schools. They provide a network to support advocacy and public education about equity issues and programs.

Contact : www.ameno.ca

E-mail : info@ameno.ca

The Toronto Coalition for Equity in Education includes many community organizations, legal clinics and advocacy groups who address issues such as employment equity, curriculum change, ESL promotion, and racial profiling.

Contact : www.urbanalliance.ca

For Further Information, Action Ideas & Advocacy Tools please go to -

The Colour of Poverty Campaign –

www.colourofpoverty.ca

Fact Sheet # 4

Understanding the Racialization of Poverty in Ontario In Health & Well-being in 2007

How does racialized poverty affect people's health & well-being ?

Many research studies show that poverty and income inequality have a strong impact on health. Related factors that affect health include:

- * unemployment; poor or unsafe working conditions
- * poor nutrition and housing conditions
- * unsafe neighbourhoods; polluted living areas
- * trouble accessing healthcare and social services

People from homes with incomes of less than \$20,000 are almost three times more likely to see a decline in their health than people with the highest incomes.

Because a higher percentage of racialized people live in poverty, they are more at risk for poor health. Because many are in unsafe work situations, they have more injuries & little protection from work-related risks.

43% of children living in poverty in Ontario are from racialized groups.

Women from lower income groups and racialized women are less likely to have clinical breast exams, mammogram X-rays to test for breast cancer, or PAP smears to test for cervical cancer.

Nearly 70% of men living in wealthiest neighbourhoods will live to age 75, while only 50% of men living in the poorest neighbourhoods will reach that age.

Immigrants tend to be healthier than other Canadians when they first arrive but, over their time in Canada, their health tends to decline.

Immigrants from non-European countries are twice as likely to report declining health as those from European countries. Refugees face higher risks of poor health than other newcomers.

There is a 3 month waiting period for newcomers to obtain Ontario health insurance (OHIP) coverage.

Refugees and people without status are often denied healthcare because they lack coverage.

In 2004, 20% of people with HIV/AIDS in Ontario were from home countries with high rates of HIV/AIDS, meaning they are mainly people of colour from African and Caribbean countries.

Quick Notes

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Everyday Lives

“One of the problems is that many people of colour find in hospitals and different places... they don't treat them the same as they treat Caucasians, the other groups.”

(older cancer patient from the Caribbean)

“I have noticed a whole bunch of newcomers, that come to the country quite healthy and they now have mental health problems because of the stress, depression...”

(shelter worker)

“Canada has a fantastic medical system... But the people in the medical system, I don't know why, but everywhere I've gone I've found a racist environment.”

(immigrant woman)

“Sometimes I am afraid of going to a white doctor. Sometimes I get a look like I shouldn't be there.”

(young woman of colour)

“Racism... ensure[s] that we end up with mental issues... depression... lack of self-esteem... [It's seen as] a result of 'me' and not the system out there.”

(healthcare practitioner)

“I have been in Canada for 10 years [applying to get refugee status]... I was sick many times and had nowhere to go because I had no OHIP... I was sent home the same day I had [my] baby. It was terrible.”

(woman living with HIV/AIDS)

Immigrants with serious medical conditions are often deemed “medically inadmissible” to Canada. Some people who already live in Canada but have serious health problems are denied OHIP.

Children who live in poverty are much more likely to experience injuries, disability, alcohol and drug problems, and mental health problems.

The Ontario Women's Health Council notes that poor women and women from racialized communities are among those most at risk for depression.

Women living in poor neighbourhoods are more likely to be pregnant in their teens and to have babies of low birth weight.

What can be done, and examples of who is doing it ?

The **Health Equity Council** works toward increasing access, equity and inclusion for all in the health sector, promoting systemic change by collectively addressing health and healthcare service disparities and inequities in the province of Ontario.

Contact - www.freewebs.com/healthequity

E-mail - healthequitycouncil@gmail.com

Access Alliance works to promote health with dignity and general well-being by improving access to services for immigrants and refugees in Toronto using a medical, social, economic and environmental determinants of health anti-oppressive framework.

Contact - www.accessalliance.ca

Phone - 416-324-8677

Across Boundaries - recognizing that systemic racism and racial violence impact the health of individuals and communities of colour this ethnoracial community mental health centre provides a range of holistic and integrated supports and services.

Contact - www.acrossboundaries.ca

Phone - 416-787-3007

Womens Health in Womens Hands is a pro-choice, anti-racist, multilingual, participatory community health centre for women of diverse backgrounds in the greater Toronto area.

Contact - www.whiwh.com

Phone - 416-593-7655

**For Further Information, Action Ideas & Advocacy Tools
please go to -**

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www.colourofpoverty.ca

Fact Sheet # 5

Understanding the Racialization of Poverty in Ontario In Employment in 2007

How do employment conditions and practices contribute to the racialization of poverty ?

Racialized people are much more likely to be unemployed than those of European backgrounds. For Arab, West Asian, South Asian and African women in Toronto, the unemployment rate is well over twice that of European women.

Almost ¾ of immigrants to Ontario have a university education. Many find that their training and work experience from other countries are not recognized or under-valued in Canada.

Racialized workers are most likely to be in low-status jobs. They make up over 40% of workers in the sewing, textile and fabric industries, over 36% of taxi and limo drivers, and 42% of electronics assemblers.

Racialized persons make up only 3% of executives, and 1.7% of directors on boards of organizations.

More workers are being hired in temporary and insecure positions. The Ontario **Employment Standards Act** does not adequately protect the rights of people in temporary and part time work, many of whom are women, racialized and/or newcomer workers.

One in four workers in Ontario earns below the poverty line. This number is higher for women overall (31%) and women of colour especially (38%).

According to Heritage Canada's Ethnic Diversity Survey, in 2003, 33% of racialized workers overall and 51% of Black workers experienced racial discrimination.

Between 2001 and 2006 in Ontario, employers were ordered by the Ministry of Labour to pay over \$168 million in unpaid wages to employees—disproportionately people of colour. Over \$100 million is unpaid.

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Last year, the Ministry found that employers violated employees' rights in 11,358 claims, but only four companies and two directors were charged.

Most domestic and garment industry workers are immigrant women of colour, whose jobs are not secure and pay very little.

The highest unemployment rates can be found among Canadian-born men of colour (11.5%) and immigrant women of colour (10%).

More workers are being hired through outside agencies instead of directly by companies. This often shifts costs onto workers - for example, gas for delivery work or supplies for cleaning.

Immigrants and refugees find that the hardest part of settlement is finding a job. Many do not know their basic rights as employees.

Some job agencies charge high sign-up fees. Some have agreements with companies they supply to make sure workers cannot be hired on by companies full time.

A study of employment agencies showed that many were willing to use whites-only selection criteria when companies requested it.

Currently only 1% of Ontario workplaces are inspected for labour standards. 10% are checked to ensure they meet health and safety standards.

Ontario's minimum wage keeps people below the poverty line, even when they work full time, at multiple jobs, and do not have families.

Migrant agricultural workers in Ontario, the majority of whom are Mexican and Caribbean, have little legal protection. One study found that 75% of migrant farm workers reported experiencing more racism in Canada than in the U.S.

What can be done, and examples of who is doing it ?

The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) calls for better legal protection for racialized workers in Ontario.

Contact : www.ocasi.org or (ph) 416-322-4950

The Policy Roundtable Mobilizing Professions & Trades (PROMPT) builds the advocacy capacity of internationally educated professionals and tradespeople to together become an effective collective voice on issues related to fair and equitable newcomer access to trades & professions in Canada.

Contact : www.promptinfo.ca or (ph) 416-932-1359 X 14

The Workers' Action Centre recommends that the Employment Standards Act should be changed and better enforced to fully protect the rights of part time and temporary workers, the minimum wage must be raised to at least the poverty line, and that workers and employers both must be better informed about workers' rights.

Contact : www.workersactioncentre.org or (ph) 416-531-0778

For Further Information, Action Ideas & Advocacy Tools go to -

The Colour of Poverty Campaign -

www.colourofpoverty.ca

Everyday Lives

“Everybody, our people who work [but don't] have enough income, we have to cope with these jobs and get money to support the family. So there is no choice.”

(Nalini, immigrant of 10 years, works as a cleaner)

“For one month, the total they paid me was \$526.”

(Sharif, works 10-12 hours per day as a courier)

“They only want Canadian experience... We got pushed towards the lowest jobs. That was all that is available to us.”

(Raj, pizza delivery worker, 15 years)

“As a Sri Lankan immigrant I am often told to do cleaning work, cleaning washrooms or washing dishes in the factory when this wasn't what I was told I would be doing..”

“You don't sleep well at night. You don't eat. There's stress. It takes a big effect on your physical and mental health.”

(Andrew, about work at a temp agency)

“When you apply for a job you never say you're from the Park [Regent Park]... You have to lie so they don't think you're a thug.”

(young black man)

“I lost my job, I am hungry. I need money for my children... I can't think well... The [claim] form they gave, it is so complicated... It took eight months until the investigation.”

(Hassan, about a failed claim for \$7000 in unpaid wages)

“A lot of employers are delighted to hear that you have no papers, because they can overwork you and exploit you.”

Fact Sheet # 6

Understanding the Racialization of Poverty in Ontario In Income Levels & Social Assistance in 2007

How does the racialization of poverty affect incomes and the need for social assistance ?

In Toronto, racialized group members are 3 times more likely to live in poverty than other groups.

Between 1980 and 2000 in Toronto, the poverty rate for the non-racialized population fell by 28%, but poverty among racialized families rose by 361%.

Ontario's minimum wage is \$8 per hour - \$6,000 a year below the low income cut-off (LICO) for a single person.

The Ontario government plans to raise the minimum wage to \$10.25 over the next 3 years. At that time (2010) it will still be nearly \$1 per hour below the poverty line.

The child poverty rate for newcomers in Toronto is 39%.

59% of poor families in Toronto are from racialized groups.

Toronto Families living below the Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO)

European	11%
South Asian	21%
East Asian	19%
South and Central American	20%
African	39%
Arab and West Asian	30%
Caribbean	22%

Specific Nationalities -

Korean	30%
Jamaican	27%
Iranian	32%
Bangladeshi	54%
Somali	72%
Afghan	60%
Chinese	21%
Taiwanese	41%
Ethiopian	57%

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- * Individual and systemic racism have clear & negative impacts on life chances for people of colour in Ontario.

Between 1981 and 2001, the number of immigrants who are poor in Toronto grew by 125%.

Poverty among newcomers to Canada is increasing over time, even though their education levels are higher than ever.

Temp workers—disproportionately people of colour - make 40% less than permanent workers in the same positions.

The Ontario government cut social assistance dollars by 22% in 1995. Without these cuts, today's amounts would be about 40% higher than they are now.

Between 1986 and 2004 in Ontario, welfare incomes fell by 26%.

Growing numbers of racialized people and many women are employed in part time and unstable work. This means they do not have employment insurance (EI), even though they pay into the EI fund.

Under the new (2007) Ontario Child Tax Benefit, a Toronto family with two children with an income of \$34,000 (about \$6000 below poverty), would receive \$24 per year.

An Ontario couple with two children would qualify for \$19,000 of social assistance per year at the *most*. This is half the amount they would need to be just at the poverty line.

Many racialized people, as well as numerous refugees and persons without documents, cannot get social assistance.

The Slow Uphill Climb

The lower income of immigrants is not just a result of recent settlement or problems adjusting. It takes about 20 years for an immigrant to make almost as much as someone from Canada of the same sex, age, and education level.

This estimate is based on the experiences of earlier immigrants from Europe, so it does not even account for many barriers faced by racialized immigrants today.

Everyday Lives

“When I moved to Toronto I couldn’t find a job, I had an apartment to pay for and the government kept cutting my welfare and I didn’t know what to do. I had nobody, so I just decided to work on the street, you know, and I realized it’s easy money.”
(Shelter resident)

“For one month, the total they paid me was \$526.”
(Sharif, works 10-12 hours/day as a courier)

“Everybody that works, they should at least get the minimum wage...”
(Raj, has two delivery jobs at \$7 per hour.)

“After [being fired]... I wanted to apply for Social Assistance [but] you have to wait for three months... It was hard, very very hard.”
(Zahra, student, sending money back home)

What can be done, and examples of who is doing it ?

The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) works toward equality for immigrant and refugee communities through more than 170 member organizations across Ontario.
Contact : www.ocasi.org
Phone - 416-322-4950

Sistering - guided by principles of anti-racism & anti-oppression works to change social conditions and inequalities which endanger homeless, under-housed and low income women’s welfare.
Contact - www.sistering.org
Phone - 416-926-9762

The Worker’s Action Centre is calling for an immediate increase in the minimum wage and many other changes to benefit workers.
Contact : www.workersactioncentre.org
Phone - 416-531-0778

For further Information, Action Ideas & Advocacy Tools please go to -

The Colour of Poverty Campaign -

www.colourofpoverty.ca

Fact Sheet # 7

Understanding the Racialization of Poverty in Ontario In Justice & Policing in 2007

How does the criminal justice system affect and impact racialized communities ?

Research shows that crime and violence in communities are very closely linked to the despair and loss of hope that come from inequality and poverty.

With the growing poverty among racialized communities in Ontario, gangs and gun-related crime have also grown. Governments & law enforcement agents tend to treat racialized persons as criminals & use the justice system to punish them, rather than addressing poverty, unemployment and inequality in these communities.

Racial profiling – targeting of racialized persons by policing authorities – is all too common. For example:

- * African Canadian students in Toronto are 4 times more likely to be stopped and 8 times more likely to be searched than white students in the same places.
- * In a large sample of Toronto youth who had no police records, more than 50% of Blacks had been searched by police in the previous two years, compared to only 8% of Whites.
- * A study in Kingston showed that police were 3.7 times more likely to stop Black people.

In Ontario, Black suspects are 5.5 times more likely to be killed or seriously injured from police use of force than White suspects, and they are 10 times more likely to be shot by police.

African Canadians represent over 6% of the federal prison population even though they comprise only about 2% of the Canadian population. In Ontario, they make up 14.0% of the federal offender population but only 3.3% of the provincial population.

The so-called “war on drugs” targets racialized communities. Police focus on low-level street dealers instead of powerful druglords because it makes for high arrest records and publicity. Many dealers are poor, racialized youth with few opportunities.

A study of more than 10,000 arrest records in Toronto showed that:

- * Whites arrested on drug charges were more likely than Blacks to be released at the scene.
- * Blacks were twice as likely as Whites to be held overnight for a bail hearing.
- * Blacks were much more likely to be charged for offences that could only be detected *after* being pulled over in traffic by police.

Research in Toronto shows that White men are less likely to be stopped by police as they grow older and have higher incomes, but these factors make no difference for black men.

Quick Notes

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- * **Racialized** persons refers to people of colour who are Canadian-born and to newcomer communities of colour.
- * By **racism**, we mean both the individual attitudes and behaviours as well as the built-in ways in which social policies and societal institutions discriminate.
- * Households that fall below Canada’s **low income cut-off (LICO)** measure, spend a much larger percent of their income on basic necessities like food and shelter than the average family.
- * Racialized families are from 2 to 4 times more likely than white families to fall below the LICO.
- * Individual and systemic racism have clear & negative impacts on life chances for people of colour in Ontario.

Racism is the most common reason for hate crimes in Canada with 57% of such crimes against Blacks and South Asians.

The Canadian government recently issued a “no fly” list of people who are thought to pose a threat to security; those on the list are banned from air travel. There is good reason to believe the list will unfairly target racial and religious minority groups.

Many racialized persons, particularly Muslim men, are targeted for searches or questioning at the Canadian border.

Toronto police are compiling a “no walk” list, which requires racialized youth to show ID and consent to questioning and searches whenever the police approach them. Their personal details are written on a special form and kept in police files.

In the name of fighting terrorism, the Canadian Government has put several Muslim men under detention for years without charges by using "security certificates". While the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that security certificates violate these individuals' rights, the court has allowed their detention to be in effect for at least another year.

Racialized and poor women are among the fastest growing groups in the prison population in Ontario.

Seven times more Black women than White women are sent to Ontario prisons. 1 of 3 women in prison is from a racialized group.

What can be done, and examples of who is doing it ?

The **African Canadian Legal Clinic (ACLC)** is working toward eliminating racism and racial profiling in the justice system in Ontario.

Contact : www.aclc.net
Phone - 416-214-4747

The **Canadian Arab Federation** advocates for reform to anti-terrorism laws, and provides support for individual victims of hate crimes.

Contact : www.caf.ca
Phone - 416-493-8635 or 1-866-886-4675

The **South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO)** - is a community based legal clinic working to provide for the legal needs of low-income South Asian Canadians in the GTA.

Contact—www.salco.net
Phone - 416-487-6371

Everyday Lives

“I’m scared when they go out with Black friends. They’re like a magnet. It’s not fair that four Black kids can’t walk around.”

“Just before take-off my colleague and I were called out from inside the plane and asked to bring out our carry-on luggage. We were told that due to a security reason we will not be able to take this flight. After asking repeatedly for the reason, I was told that a passenger complained to the pilot that I was staring at the passenger. The pilot considered this to be security risk... I wear a turban and the pilot mistook my identity for a Muslim person.”

“[After being interrogated and searched 8 out of 9 times when crossing the border], it is extremely difficult to develop a sense of loyalty to a country where each time one attempts to re-enter he is treated in such fashion.”

“When you’re a young person and people think you’re bad, what is the point of behaving well anyway, if they are going to treat you like a criminal...?”

“where I live, which is a lower-income neighbourhood, where we are “housed” - there's no other word for it - [our] youth live in a glass bowl, in a poisoned environment, where they are continually...harassed and brutalized by security forces - not just the police, but by security guards also.”

“The constable assumed either my wife was a prostitute... or we were in Parkdale to buy drugs.”

For Further Information, Action Ideas & Advocacy Tools please go to -

The Colour of Poverty Campaign -

www.colourofpoverty.ca

Fact Sheet # 8

Understanding the Racialization of Poverty in Ontario In Immigration & Newcomer Settlement in 2007

How do immigration and settlement processes affect the racialization of poverty ?

Definitions

Economic immigrants are workers and their families who are accepted into Canada because of their skills or education.

Family Class immigrants are people who are sponsored by a family member who already lives in Canada.

Convention refugees are granted protection in Canada because they face persecution in another country.

Refugee claimants are people who are in Canada & have made a claim for protection. Over half have of such claims are denied.

“Non-status” refers to anyone who’s living in Canada for what ever reasons, cannot obtain legal status or has status that expired.

Regularization would mean that non-status or undocumented people are given legal status in Canada.

Many immigrants come to Canada because they believe that there is plenty of work, and that their skills will be needed. Often, their credentials are not officially or formally recognized.

Many refugees come to Canada to escape extreme poverty, abuse, violence or war, but many face poverty and discrimination in Canada too, & social services are not able to effectively address their needs.

Immigrants and refugees find that the hardest part of settlement is finding a job. Many do not know about health and social services, and do not know their employment, housing or other basic rights.

Although immigrants to Canada have much more education than in the past, they have a higher chance of being poor. Between 1981 and 2001, the number of immigrants who are poor in Toronto - largely people of colour - grew by 125%.

Agencies that help immigrants and refugees do not have enough funding and cannot keep up with the demand for their services.

There are not enough English as a Second Language (ESL) training programs. School boards are unofficially allowed to transfer their ESL funds to other program areas as they need if they wish.

It is estimated that 200,000 to 300,000 people live without legal immigration status in Canada, mostly in Ontario.

Many “non-status” people come from countries of extreme poverty and violence, but do not qualify as Convention Refugees. Not having status means that such newcomers:

- * can’t access health & social services, police protection
- * cannot work legally, so risk abuse and unfair wages
- * do not qualify for housing support
- * often cannot send their children to school
- * don’t qualify for some language training programs, etc.

The only way for non-status to apply for status is on “humanitarian and compassionate” grounds. This is granted only in very exceptional cases.

Quick Notes

- * Ontario’s growing racialized communities face a disproportionate, ongoing, & increasing risk of being poor.
- * **Racialized** persons refers to people of colour who are Canadian-born & to newcomer communities of colour.
- * By **racism**, we mean both the individual attitudes and behaviours as well as the built-in ways in which social policies and societal institutions discriminate.
- * Households that fall below Canada’s **low income cut-off (LICO)** measure, spend a much larger percent of their income on basic necessities like food and shelter than the average family.
- * Racialized families are from 2 to 4 times more likely than white families to fall below the LICO.
- * Individual and systemic racism have clear & negative impacts on life chances for people of colour in Ontario.

Canadian policies for family sponsorship can delay or prevent families from reuniting because:

- * “family” does not include siblings or extended family.
- * refugee children cannot sponsor parents or siblings.
- * those living below the LICO or on social assistance cant sponsor others
- * there are high fees and very long delays.

Immigration and refugee processes place many women in dependant situations.

Some immigrant and refugee women face violence in their homes, but have little or no protection because:

- * they fear calling the police could result in deportation.
- * escaping abusive relationships with sponsors can mean losing status.
- * they may not know about support services or counseling
- * many have no health coverage.
- * people have been reported to immigration when they tried to access healthcare, social housing or other services.
- * abusive men know they can escape punishment if women are in positions where they cannot afford to report violence.

What can be done, and examples of who is doing it ?

We must advocate for:

- * Clear immigration policies and consistent services.
- * Expanded family class policies to help more families reunite.
- * Reduced wait times for all types of newcomers.
- * A refugee claims process that is fair and consistent.
- * A regularization programme for non-status people in Canada.
- * Stable funding for agencies serving newcomers.
- * Expanded ESL learning accessible to all newcomers.
- * Expanded translation services in health, schools and elsewhere.
- * Fair, consistent criteria for newcomer access to their trades & professions.

Canadian Council for Refugees is a non-profit umbrella organization committed to the rights and protection of refugees in Canada and around the world, and to the settlement of refugees and immigrants in Canada. For more information: www.ccrweb.ca or (ph) 514-277-7223

Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) works toward equality for immigrant and refugee communities through their 170+ member organizations across Ontario. Contact : www.ocasi.org or Phone - 416-322-4950

STATUS Campaign is a national network of groups & individuals calling for a regularization programme for non-status immigrants in Canada. Contact : www.ocasi.org/status or E-mail : status@ocasi.org

Everyday Lives

“A lot of employers are delighted to hear that you have no papers, because they can overwork you and exploit you.”

I don’t really think [social services] help in term of looking for a job... It’s just about paying your rent until you can pay it for yourself. ”

“...if people weren’t so ignorant about Africa in general, it would be much easier for us, really.”

“My husband and I got into Canada by the points system. We passed and became landed due to our education, English skills and other factors... But then we got here and there were no jobs. Our diplomas were not really worth anything.”

“We all go through the same kind of feeling... not being able to access anything here. Just not being seen as people. You know, as human beings, entitled.”

“To sponsor, you need a certain income. What can you do? I cannot make that much.”

“My mom told me... we have to work twice as hard in order to achieve the same sort of level or to be seen on the same level.”

“Legal or illegal, with or without papers we all pay taxes. We are contributing to the growth of this country. So, if they do not want us to be legal then they should return us all the money that we have contributed.”

For Further Information, Action Ideas & Advocacy Tools please go to -

The Colour of Poverty Campaign

www.colourofpoverty.ca

Fact Sheet # 9

Understanding the Racialization of Poverty in Ontario In Housing & Homelessness in 2007

How does racialized poverty affect housing and homelessness ?

Between 1980 and 2000 in Toronto, poverty among racialized families rose by 361%.

According to a health report, poverty and “minority race” are key factors that can lead to being homeless.

Immigrants and refugees in Ontario are at risk for homelessness due to poverty, discrimination, cuts to social programs, lack of housing services, and lack of information about their rights.

Racialized groups in Toronto have higher levels of homelessness and poor housing than non-racialized groups. The city is facing a major shortage in affordable housing.

Of the growing number of families using shelters, 24% are refugees.

In Toronto in 2001, over 43% of recent immigrants had “core housing needs,” which means their housing is too expensive, too crowded or in need of major repairs.

People who rent their homes are more likely to have housing needs, and to pay more than they can afford.

Poor housing standards and homelessness are strongly linked to poor health.

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In 1981, the rates of home ownership among immigrants were higher than those for Canadian born people. By 2001, the rates were lower for immigrants.

About 80% of recent immigrants depend on rental housing.

Newcomers and racialized groups are much more likely to live in areas with high rates of poverty.

Many immigrants and refugees live in unsafe housing conditions, some of which are not covered by tenant protection laws.

In one study, almost 80% of newcomers to Toronto reported that their housing conditions were poor. The most common problems were: rats, roaches, poor ventilation, not enough hot water, and overcrowding.

Some landlords discriminate by refusing to rent to racialized tenants, or simply making conditions too hard for people to meet, for example:

- asking for large deposits that people won't get back
- asking for too many documents (social insurance numbers, work permits, or pay stubs)
- threatening eviction based on negative views about cleanliness or cooking odours
- refusing people based on the age or number of children, family size, legal status, or gender.

In Toronto, about 71,000 households are on the waiting list for social housing.

People without status often cannot get housing assistance or social housing. This has the most impact on women and families with young children.

In a study of homeless Caribbean youth in Toronto, large numbers of both males and females said they had suffered abuse, violence or discrimination at the hands of the police.

Among homeless youth, immigrants and refugees are over-represented; this is especially true for young women of Caribbean and African backgrounds in Ottawa and Toronto.

Poor and racialized neighbourhoods are often stereotyped as “bad areas.” People who are already criminalized are at risk of eviction, especially from social housing; even family members of someone who is charged with an offence can be evicted.

Racialized groups largely born in Canada or living in Canada for many years still experience neighbourhood segregation, even when their shared economic situation improves.

What can be done, and examples of who is doing it ?

Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA) promotes human rights in housing and works to remove the barriers to suitable housing for marginalized individuals and families.

Contact : www.equalityrights.org/cera/ or Phone (Toronto) - 416-944-0087 or 1-800-263-1139 and (Ottawa) - 613-233-8618

Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) is developing a strategy to create affordable housing in all cities, in locations near services, good food markets, and work opportunities, seeks

education for newcomers about housing services & tenant rights & tries to make sure that housing strategies and services address needs of racialized groups, immigrants, refugees & people without status.

Contact : www.ocasi.org or Phone - 416-322-4950

Sistering - guided by principles of anti-racism & anti-oppression works to change social conditions & inequalities which endanger homeless, under-housed & low-income women's welfare.

Contact - www.sistering.org or phone - 416-926-9762

For Further Information, Action Ideas & Advocacy Tools see –

The Colour of Poverty Campaign –

www.colourofpoverty.ca

Everyday Lives

“[b]eing on welfare, or being homeless basically, you have no references, and most landlords don't like that... I don't have [first and last months' rent]... and secondly, it's my colour, some landlord don't like that. I went to this lady and she said she has a problem with Black people.”

“I have found in a lot of the female households with refugees... the husbands have basically been lost in the war and they [come] with children and sisters, and the discrimination is so profound that... if there isn't a male led household some landlords won't even accept them as tenants.”

“The number of newcomers going to shelters is just growing in leaps & bounds... a population that was less than one percent is now at least 50 percent...”

“Not having a place for me was mostly about income and problems with landlords... as soon as they see what you look like, the place is rented.”

Fact Sheet # 10

Understanding the Racialization of Poverty in Ontario In Food (In)security in 2007

How does racialized poverty influence food (in)security ?

Food security means that all people in society have access to food they can afford and that is:

- * healthy and safe
- * enough for their families
- * from local stores (instead of food banks and shelters)
- * grown in ways that are safe for the environment
- * culturally appropriate, familiar and suitable

Not surprisingly, people who live in poverty often do not have food security. This is true in over 11% of Ontario households.

Poor and racialized people often have trouble finding affordable food stores in their own neighbourhoods.

One study revealed that being unable to find food from their own cultures contributed to people's experience of poverty.

Almost 20% of low income parents and 13% of recent immigrant parents in Toronto report being unable to provide their children with a healthy meal. Similar rates were found in a Northern Ontario study.

43% of children living in poverty in Ontario are from racialized groups.

Between 1989 and 2004, the number of Canadians who used food banks increased by 123%. Even so, research tells us that most food-insecure households do not use food banks.

Many studies show that people living on social assistance and minimum wage cannot afford a healthy diet.

Mothers in low income homes suffer extra stress, as they worry about not having enough food and how to plan and prepare cheap meals. They sometimes go hungry themselves so that their children can eat.

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Food eaten at home costs average Canadians about 14% of their incomes. Low income Canadians spend about 30% of their incomes on food.

People living in food insecure homes in Canada are more likely to have diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and food allergies.

Children living with food insecurity are more likely to have: low iron, low energy, more hospital visits, slower progress in school, anxiety, headaches, and difficulty getting along with other children.

What can be done, and examples of who is doing it ?

Access Alliance works with food banks and advocates to increase newcomer access to food banks and to develop culturally appropriate service delivery models.

Contact : www.accessalliance.ca or Phone - 416-324-8677

Afri-Can Food Basket is a community-based, not-for-profit cooperative community development movement that is committed to meeting the nutrition, health and employment needs of members of the African Canadian community, in particular those who are economically and socially vulnerable.

Contact - www.africanfoodbasket.com or Ph. - 416-248-5639

Foodshare suggests many policy changes and actions to promote food security such as setting basic minimum income standards and policies that promote equality in work, and making food a basic human right.

Contact : www.foodshare.net or Phone - 416-363-6441

Toronto Food Policy Council suggests that food security should be part of the city's plans for growth and that cities should support local, community based economic development for people in marginalized neighbourhoods.

Contact : www.toronto.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm

For Further Information, Action Ideas & Advocacy Tools please go to -

The Colour of Poverty Campaign -

www.colourofpoverty.ca

Everyday Lives

“I was buying two bags of milk every week because that is how much my kids needed. I started buying one bag a week. Half a cup a day for each one.”
(immigrant man, working for less than minimum wage)

“I put on a lot of weight... That was because I was living in a shelter at the time. So the doctor told me that I got a high cholesterol level. I've got sleep apnea because of the food I was eating.”
(former shelter resident)

“Health food stores are extra trips. If you don't have the motivation ... to really search them out, you have to rely on what you can get from the grocery. But if you're... on a budget, that means another (public transit token)...or two.”
(immigrant woman with cancer)

“I'm Muslim and sometimes at lunch they serve pork.”
(shelter resident)

“Somebody... who's living a very modest life and especially is short of cash ... [and] new in Canada, has no idea about the system, and no idea about the western food, would just say, oh, this is so privileged.”
(immigrant woman, about a nutrition pamphlet for cancer patients)

Being poor means...
... “not being able to have friends sleep over”
... “pretending you forgot your lunch”
(children from North Bay, ON)